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FM AMEMBASSY DHAKA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2602  
INFO RUCNCLC/CHILD LABOR COLLECTIVE  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 1362  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 9469  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 7649  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 8798  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1559  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0256  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1071  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 0038  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
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SUBJECT: SEARCH FOR ALLEGED CHILD WORKERS AT HARVEST RICH

REF: A. KOZLOWSKI/ADAMS EMAIL NOV 11

1B. 2006

11. Summary: After a labor rights group accused the Harvest Rich Garment factory of using child labor, Harvest Rich denied the allegations and produced some of the alleged child workers, who said they are 18 or older. Visiting buyers were unable to find any evidence of child workers, while NLC was unable to present any of the 200 plus child workers. A labor activist stated that the child workers were fired in October, and the workers who now claimed to be 18 or older are at Harvest Rich's dormitories to prevent them recanting their claims of majority. Buyers said they had no plans to cancel orders based on the Harvest Rich report. End summary.

12. (SBU) After the release of the National Labor Committee's (NLC) October report on child labor at Harvest Rich, buyer representatives from Tesco, Hanes, Marks and Spencer, and labor standards accrediting firms arrived in Dhaka to inspect the Harvest Rich factory in Narayanganj, 20 kilometers south of Dhaka. According to the report, which provided photos and descriptions of a number of alleged child workers, there were 200 to 300 child workers out of 2,500 employees at Harvest Rich.

13. (SBU) On November 6, according to Solidarity Center Field Representative David Welsh, a group claiming to represent workers at Harvest Rich presented the alleged child workers to the buyer representatives. According to Welsh, the alleged child workers said that they were not minors but were 18 or older, and provided medical examination certificates attesting to their age.

14. (SBU) Stephen A. Jessep, President of the international labor standards accreditation firm, Worldwide Responsible Apparel Production (WRAP), which accredited Harvest Rich as compliant with responsible labor standards, told laboff that that the presented workers said that NLC's Charles Kernaghan had promised them visits to the United States in exchange for their statements that they were child workers. Welsh told laboff that he had a private meeting with Kernaghan, who was not able to bring any of the alleged 200 child workers with him. Welsh added that whether there really were child workers is "somewhat murky."

¶5. (SBU) On November 7 and 8, the buyers representatives met with factory management and toured the factory. Jesseph told laboff that if there were 200 child workers there, and that if they hid from his inspectors during their inspections, there are no bathrooms or rooftops large enough to hide them all. He said that WRAP's auditors will be reviewing employment records to determine the employment history of the seven workers presented in the NLC report and to review the employment applications of possible other child workers.

¶6. (SBU) Labor organizer Kalpona Akter, who assisted in the NLC study, told Jesseph and laboff that the 200 plus missing child workers were all fired in October. She added that the alleged child workers presented to the buyer representatives were all detained at the Harvest Rich dormitories and not at the factory. She insisted that Harvest Rich pressured the workers to say they were 18 and older and keeps them at the dormitory to prevent close examination by the buyers.

¶7. (SBU) As of November 9, many of the buyer representatives continued to inspect the Harvest Rich factory, question management, and survey other suppliers. Welsh told laboff that all of the representatives said that they do not plan to cancel their orders at Harvest Rich based on the NLC report.  
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